

Granny's Story  
or  
The Invocation of Lord Krishna

By Benjamin Pritchard

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**This story is dedicated to my father, Edward W. Pritchard, who carried me**

*Lead me from the unreal to the Real  
Lead me from the darkness to the Light  
Lead me from the temporary to the Eternal*

*- Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*

I have a maternal grandmother who is the matriarchal leader of our family. She had 6 kids, one of whom was my mother. My grandma, who we all called Granny ran a pre-school for 40+ years: she was my first teacher, and I have had a life-long relationship with her.

During the past years, she has grown older and is losing some of her mobility and independence. By this point, it is no longer easy for her to travel long distances or be away from home for too long. However, recently there was a death in the family in Dayton, which is about a four hour long ride from where we are located.

Therefore, I took it upon myself to escort my grandmother to the funeral. It was a very difficult journey for her, and we had to leave around 6:30am in the morning to get there on time. The drive to the funeral, and the funeral itself was without incident.

However, the way home was a different story. A severe snow storm descended on the area, and we were facing very strong winds, and almost complete white-out conditions. My grandmother was getting scared, and I told her everything would be OK and I would get her home safe. Things got so bad we finally stopped for lunch, and as I helped her out of the car, I held her hand. I realized at that point that I hadn't actually held her hand since I was a small child as she took me to her preschool.

After lunch, we resumed our journey. But the spectacle surrounding us was very bad. We were heading north, but as we continued onwards, we witnessed several catastrophic multiple car pile-ups the entire length of 71 in the opposite direction. We kept commenting on how weird it was, but we couldn't quite put our finger on what was strange about it. Over the course of a 4 hour journey, we saw at least 10 different pile ups, with the entire length of the expressway full of stopped traffic, flipped cars, destroyed cars, people out walking on the road, police, EMS, and other strange things.

I could tell my grandma was very tired, but she was forcing herself to stay awake. Somehow the inspiration hit me to tell her a story.

So as I continued to drive, I told her the story of Arjuna that suddenly came into my mind. She has grown deeply religious in her old age, and I told the story to her in a way that would appeal to her Christian sensibilities.

There's this famous book from India I said. Kind of like the Bible. It is called the Bhagavad Gita.

The what, she asked?

Just call it the Gita I said. Anyway, the guy in there is named Arjuna.

Arjuna was a prince I told her. His entire kingdom was facing civil war, and he decided to drive his chariot into the heart of the battle to see for himself what was going on.

But when he looked over, he realized that God was driving his chariot! So the whole rest of the book, I told her, was the conversation God had with Arjuna explaining things to him.

My grandma seemed to like the story, and she fell asleep peacefully while I continued to drive.

We arrived home in one piece, and I helped me grandmother into the house.

It was not until the next morning that I spoke to her again. She told me she'd been on the phone someone who had also been at the funeral... and that the wrecks on 71 had been worse than we'd even known. Many, many cars were destroyed, and at least one person had actually been killed.

She told me she couldn't remember who it was who had called. But she told me that she'd relayed that she'd been OK because her grandson had done such a good job driving.

She seemed proud of me.

I thought back to the Bhagavad Gita, and the story about Krishna leaving the chariot when he'd gotten Arjuna to his destination: the story goes that as Krishna did so, the chariot exploded from all the enemy fire it had taken during the entire war; during Arunja's journey, however, the chariot was under Krishna' protection and was therefore safe.

My grandmother then told me that she thought God had kept us safe.

I paused, then I told my grandmother that I thought so too.

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